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ABSTRACT

It is critical that colleges and universities play a leading role in preparing students to function effectively in the more pluralistic society that is developing. This task can be accomplished by updating curriculum to be more responsive to diversity issues. One such effort to infuse multiculturalism into theory and practice in the counseling pedagogy is a graduate-level course at Millersville University (Pennsylvania), "Multicultural Counseling." In implementing this course, it became apparent that students were able to comprehend and absorb the underlying theory, but that they had difficulty grasping many issues associated with race relations and cultural differences. To enhance student understanding, simulations were introduced to encourage students to examine their own perspectives. One simulation was the BAFA BAFA simulation, an experience in cross-cultural immersion, and another was the Drawbridge exercise, which allows the student to journey in a previous time period to explore issues of race, victim blaming, and individual responsibility. The use of simulations was found to be an excellent technique to stimulate dialogue and thinking about cultural differences and multiculturalism. (Contains 18 references.) (SLD)

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"THE UTILIZATION OF SIMULATIONS IN MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION"

ED 364 613

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INTRODUCTION

The subject of multiculturalism has become increasingly important in recent years, and it is envisioned that as our society reaches the 21st century cultural diversity will have an even greater impact on population demographics (Lee & Richardson, 1991). Several researchers have indicated that by the year 2000, more then one third of the United States population will be a representative of a racial and ethnic minority group and will comprise 45% of the students attending our public school systems. Further, these researchers have contended that if the United States is to remain competitive businesses must learn how to capitalize upon human diversity in a world where increasingly working with minority group members is the norm not the exception (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992). Additionally, Sue et al.(1992), indicated that teachers and counselors have already confronted these demographic realities and will be first to experience these demographic shifts in their classrooms, schools and communities. Therefore, it is critical that colleges and universities play a leading role in preparing its constituents to function effectively in a more pluralistic society.

The task of adequately preparing, for this new world order, can be accomplished by updating curriculum, in an effort, to be more responsive to diversity issues. To this end university curriculum committees across the country are looking at ways to incorporate gender, race, and multicultural perspectives into the curriculum. One such effort to infuse issues of multiculturalism into

ED 364 577

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the theory and practice in the counseling pedagogy is a graduate level course developed for the Department of Psychology at Millersville University of Pennsylvania, entitled Multicultural Counseling.

This course was designed to expose and sensitize graduate level counseling students to the theory, research, and practice relative to multiculturalism. The client populations these students will encounter upon graduation will increasingly be of a multicultural nature, and it is imperative that these future counseling professionals enhance their understanding, tolerance and respect for differences.

During an initial implementation of this course it became evident that while these students were able to comprehend and absorb the underlying theory embodied in the subject of multicultural counseling, the issues associated with race relations and cultural differences were harder for students to incorporate. In an effort to respond to the instructional mandate of providing the best possible education to these students, simulations, (i.e. structured experiential exercises) were introduced at strategic periods through-out the course to encourage students to look at their own value systems, cultural orientations, and notions regarding race etc.. Researchers have concluded that it is these underlying belief systems that influence human behavior in subtle ways.

Two examples of simulations utilized in this course were the BAFA, BAFA simulation (Shirts, 1973), and the Drawbridge (Katz, 1950), exercise. The BAFA, BAFA simulation is an experience in cross-cultural emersion in which the new-

comer to the culture must learn the rules of the culture through observation only. The Drawbridge exercise allows the participant to journey to a previous time period in history in order to explore issues surrounding race, blaming the victim, and individual responsibility.

It is this researcher's contention that the complexity of the process of inclusion of multiculturalism into the curriculum does not rest merely with a knowledge and receptivity of the facts by students. The real challenge to be faced by professional educators for inclusion to be effective is the development of methodologies that re-structure the learners field of cognition and perception.

The utilization of simulations as discussed above was found to be an excellent technique to stimulate dialogue and thinking surrounding the subjects of culture, cultural differences, and multiculturalism in a non-threatening and pro-active learning environment. Student evaluations received from the participants indicated that the students learned as much from the simulations as they did from the theory and practice introduced through the course.

NEED AND RATIONALE

Any discussion focusing on multicultural counseling would be incomplete with-out some discussion of the terms "inclusiveness" and "exclusiveness" and their relationship to how scholars define culture. (Fukuyama,1990; Lee & Richardson, 1991; Locke, 1990, Sue et al.,1992). Several scholars have defined

culture to include race, class, religion, sex, age, affectional orientation, etc. Sue et al., (1992) indicated that.

> There are those who prefer to limit the discussion of multicultural counseling to what has been referred to as "Visible Racial Ethnic Minority Groups" African American, American Indians , Asian American, and Hispanic and Latinos. Those who hold this point of view acknowledge that to some extent all counseling is cross- cultural, but that the term can be defined so broadly that it dilutes the focus of racial and ethnic concerns (a primary one being racism) and allows counseling professionals to avoid and omit dealing with the four major minority groups in our society. (p.478)

While several units of the course focused on international and global perspectives vis a vis multicultural counseling, the course was structured around issues relevant to the counseling and human development needs and concerns of those groups referred to as racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. These four groups are the African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American. These groups were the primary focus of the course for several key reasons. First, as future counseling professionals these students will encounter these individuals a clients and co-workers in their future work settings. Secondly, while some evidence suggests that members of these groups experience more environmental stressors, as a rule, these groups under utilize traditional counseling services. Not only do these groups under utilize counseling services but also tend to terminate counseling services at a rate greater than 50% after only one contact with a counselor.

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Which when compared to the termination rate of 30% for Caucasian clients that figure represents a dramatic contrast (Sue & Sue, 1991). Finally, these groups have experienced racism, oppression, and years of discriminatory practices (Baruth & Manning (1991). Which results in some members of these groups feeling helpless, powerless, and suffering form low self-esteem, poor self-concept, lack of motivation, feelings of frustration, hate, anger, apathy, ambivalence and depression (Sue & Sue, 1991).

If the counselor education curriculum is to be responsive to the needs of future professionals as well as to the needs of their diverse clients it is imperative that courses as well as university curriculum include several specific components. These components include a knowledge based component, an affective component, a conscious raising component, and a skills component (Sue & Sue, 1991).

CURRICULAR IMPLICATIONS

Corvin & Wiggins,(1989), indicated that the acquisition of counseling technical skills and cultural knowledge are important elements in effective cross-cultural counselor training. These scholars also concluded that the trainee needs to explore one additional area. This area is the trainee's willingness to explore his/ her own issues surrounding race and racism which is the affective and conscious raising component discussed previously.

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According to Byrnes & Kiger (1990), the literature on prejudicial attitudes has proposed that far more research has been devoted to what these attitudes are and who are the individuals who hold prejudicial views and far less has been written on how to reduce these attitudes. Further, these researchers indicate that simulations and role play activities have shown some effectiveness in changing attitudes and behaviors. Another glaring fact supported by the literature is that it is incorrect to assume that merely obtaining information and knowledge about minorities and their culture is enough to reduce prejudice and discrimination. (Bruin, 1985; Byrnes & Kiger, 1990; Sue & Sue, 1991).

Since a formal discussion of attitude formation is beyond the scope of this article let it suffice to say that while prejudicial attitudes toward people are learned behavior (Allport,1954; Bruin, 1985), the process can be, at least, theoretically unlearned.

While there have been few empirical studies validating the statistical significance of simulations as effective training tools for attitude change several researchers have found promising evidence that the utilization of simulations and other experiential activities do impact attitude change (Byrnes & Kiger, 1990).

According to Stadsklev, (1974), the technique of simulation/ gaming gives the student an opportunity to learn in an experiential mode rather than the more traditional lecture format.

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Coleman, (1967), defines a game or simulation as

> A game is a way of partitioning off a portion of the action from the complex stream-of-life activities. It partitions off a set of players, a set of allowable actions, a segment of time, and establishes a framework within which the action takes place.It establishes what one might describe as a minute system of activities, and if the game contains more than a single player (as most games do), the game can even be described as a minute social system.(p.15)

In addition, while the findings in the literature is inconsistent on the effectiveness of simulations in changing attitudes some studies have indicated positive attitude changes in subjects (Byrnes & Kiger, 1990; Clore & Jeffrey, 1992; Handlers & Austin, 1980; Jones, Sowell, Jones, & Butler, 1981; Mann & Jarvis, 1968). Similarly, Stadsklev (1974), viewed simulations and gaming experiences as an ideal way to impact learning and thinking around such complex and sensitive issues as attitudes and values.

CONCLUSION

Courses similar to the one discussed above provide an arena in which important issues in human relations can be discussed openly and honestly. The United States is at a pivotal cross roads in its development both economically and socially. While certain quarters in our society are encouraging isolationism, the global reality of interconnectedness is unescapable. Therefore, it is critical for our citizenry to confront diversity with all its complexities with anticipation, excitement, and enthusiasm for it is human diversity which is truly the hallmark of the "New Global Order".

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